

ON DISTYLA SPINIFERA.

BY GEORGE WESTERN, F.R.M.S.

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PLATE XXI.

This is apparently an undescribed species ; I first found it last spring in some stuff taken on Putney Heath, one or two specimens only, but was unable to find more till a few weeks back, when it turned up again somewhat more abundantly, so that now with the help of Mr. Rousselet, who has prepared some slides of it, and of Mr. Dixon Nuttall, to whom I am indebted for drawings, I am able to place it on record. At first sight it rather resembles *Metopidia oxysternon*, but on closer examination the resemblance is found to be very superficial, and it proves to be a *Distyla*. In shape it is a long ellipse, the posterior two-thirds protected with a lorica closed behind, abruptly truncated and open in front, but continued by a stiffened membrane forming a sort of double hood for the protection of the head and neck, which are thus capable of entire retraction within the lorica proper. This is divided into two plates with a membranous lateral invagination. The dorsal plate is apparently the smaller of the two. It is depressed, and owing to the presence of a triangular ridge commencing abruptly at the junction of the anterior and middle thirds of its length, and extending almost to its posterior edge, is higher behind than in front. Other ridges and depressions give it a regular faceted appearance. The lower or ventral shield is hemispherical in transverse section, and has its lateral edges inverted to form the lower plane of the lateral inangulation. On the postero-lateral angles of the edges, one on either side, are two thorn-like spines, at the base of which are situated the lateral antennæ. This striking peculiarity, leading to the easy identification of this Rotifer, I have chosen as the origin of the specific name. The ventral surface is divided into three planes by two longitudinal ridges, extending from the ventral edge and terminating abruptly

at the junction of the middle and posterior thirds of its length, behind which the surface is deeply excavated. A large bulbous three-jointed foot, which, though retractile, is habitually protruded, emerges through an opening in the posterior part of the ventral shield. The foot ends in two long, narrow, slightly curved, and sharp pointed toes. There is a large single eye placed on a transparent brain. The occipital antenna is large and crowned with a bunch of setæ. The trophi of the usual form have four teeth on each uncus. The other internal organs present no peculiarities, and therefore require no separate notice. This Rotifer has to some extent the sleeping habits of the Cathypnadæ. I have always found it grubbing about amongst the sandy sediment at the bottom of the pond, and it has a trick of covering itself with small particles of sand, etc., which at times make it difficult to distinguish. Briefly its Specific Characters may be said to be: A faceted lorica higher behind than in front. The dorsal shield, the smaller of the two; ventral with inverted edges bearing two thorn-like spines on their postero-lateral angles. Foot large, with two long, narrow, curved, and pointed toes. Trophi with four teeth. Size $\frac{1}{150}$ ". Habitat: Putney Heath.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE XXI.

Distyla spinifera.

- FIG. 1. Dorsal view of Rotifer.
 „ 2. Ventral view.
 „ 3. Lateral view.
 „ 4. Trophi slightly crushed.
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